Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. M079 - Horan School
Secondary School 75M079
55 East 120 Street
Manhattan
NY 10035

Principal: Greer Phillips

Dates of Review:
November 2, 2017 - November 3, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Clarence Williams Jr.
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Celebration to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Focus to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as Additional Finding. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School


School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</table>
## School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Systems for Improvement

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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, work products, discussions and teaching strategies, including questioning, scaffolds in English and/or native language, and routines, strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports and extensions.

Impact

Students with disabilities and English as a New Language (ENL) students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- All students in every class were engaged with multiple entry points. In a dual language English Language Arts (ELA) class, students were observed working on a “what they know, what they want to know, and what they learned” (KWL) chart about the Mexican Day of the Dead celebration. Students were broken down into three tiers. Tier one students received multiple prompts in Spanish. For example, one student was observed responding to the question, “What do you know about the day of the dead?” When the student didn’t respond, the teacher stated the same question in Spanish. The student responded “It’s a happy holiday.” Within the same group a student was observed using an annotated pamphlet that stated the facts of the Day of the Dead. The student wrote the annotations in the KWL chart under what they know. Students were able to elaborate on the topic. For example, one student stated, “It is a time for remembering others that died.” Another student was observed struggling with the language, the teacher asked the student to say it in Spanish and walked her through the English response. The student stated with verbal prompting from the teacher, “I know that it is a Mexican holiday.” This level of scaffolds and multiple entry points was observed in every class visited.

- In the vast majority of classes, students exhibited high levels of thinking, participation and ownership. In a self-contained six to one to one social studies class, students were observed working on the objective, “How can I be a positive citizen in my community?” Students were comparing the characteristics and words associated with being a positive citizen and a negative citizen. Each student was engaged in a peer-to-peer conversation. A student was stamping a picture of breaking the law for a bad citizen and assisted another student in the group on stamping a picture of someone in school as a good citizen. An example of ownership was seen a self-contained English Language Arts (ELA) class. Students took on the role of student leaders in the classroom by walking around and handing out vocabulary response tasks to their classmates. An additional role of the student leader was to ask students, “How will you show respect during this class?” A student answered the question by placing the answer in the student leader’s hand. The answer stated, “Keep hands and feet to yourself”, “Use kind words” and “Keep objects to yourself.”

- In all classes observed, students demonstrated higher-order thinking skills. In a multicultural cuisine class, students were observed using math and vocabulary skills in order to prepare Day of the Dead bread. They were measuring ingredients and using vocabulary words such as anise and teaspoon. The teacher asked a student, “How many teaspoons of anise do you need?” The student counted three teaspoons. Another student identified by name a grate to shave the oranges. When asked what they were doing a student stated, “We’re making Day of the Dead bread.”
Findings
School leaders support new teachers with effective feedback, although this practice is not yet consistent for all teachers. Feedback captures strengths and weaknesses that are aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact
Teacher observations promote professional growth, though there are missed opportunities within an inconsistent feedback cycle. Feedback reflects clear expectations for teachers, however it does not yet align with professional goals for teachers.

Supporting Evidence

- An observation report on a teacher demonstrated areas of strength and weakness. An informal observation of a teacher new to the profession demonstrated areas of strength that included demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy. The administrator stated, “Your plan cited the opportunity for students to not only complete a graphic organizer based on the elements of the story but also allowed them to edit the final project.” Areas of growth included improving on managing student behavior. The administrator provided next steps which included using established behavior management protocols during classroom instruction, and reinforces positive behaviors and redirect negative behaviors. Although the report captures areas of strength and weakness, it does not reflect how they are aligned to the goals of the particular teacher.

- School leaders support new teachers with cycles of observations. This was evident in an observation summary document that showed each teacher’s observation cycle beginning with the option formal or informal. The date of the observation and the follow up visit consisted of non-evaluative visits and instructional walk-throughs. One teacher new to teaching received an informal observation on October 6th with follow up visits on October 9th and 11th. The teacher stated that leadership supports them by giving feedback and following up to ensure compliance and support. Although this was evident in teacher observations observed, there was not clear evidence of a strategy in place for all teachers. For example, one teacher observation stated that the teacher should use Webb’s Depth of Knowledge questions but does not provide strategies on how to incorporate the strategies into the lesson.

- To capture the strengths and challenges of teachers, school leaders presented an English literature observation form that is aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The observation demonstrated that the teacher designed coherent instruction by consistently referencing the learning objective and making connections to the concepts being taught. The administrator further stated, “Your planning was detailed with varying depth of knowledge questions and materials needed to provide access to the concepts being discussed and were readily available.” To capture weakness in the area of assessment in instruction, the administrator stated, “I did not observe a quantitative tool being utilized during the twenty minutes in the classroom.” Although the observation captured strengths and weaknesses, it was not clear how the observation feedback was a part of a larger system of frequent observations. The observation provided next steps for each area of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, but did not reflect the evaluator’s overall comments that literacy must be consistent in all areas of instruction.
**Findings**

Curricula that demonstrate higher-order thinking skills and rigor are coherent across all grades. Academic tasks are developed and refined based on student work.

**Impact**

Curricula require that all students, including ENL students and students with disabilities, must demonstrate their thinking. Curricula provide examples of how individual students are cognitively engaged.

**Supporting Evidence**

- There is coherence across all grades that support how students are required to demonstrate their thinking. The administration provided a math unit map that showed students were required to study what ratio means in a real-world situation. Lower-functioning students were required to demonstrate their thinking by identifying which set has more or less when given two sets of objects of different values and then provide examples using groups of boys and girls. Other students were required to create a ratio statement involving different quantities using pictures of dogs and cats. This was evident in all unit maps. A social studies unit on constitutional foundations required students to demonstrate their thinking by matching pictures representing government laws and why the laws are important. The unit also states that students will be required to vote on a classroom activity, which may include a field trip or a mock election for public office. Teachers have stated that coherence in the planning allows for the consistency that the students need in order to succeed.

- Refinements are made to curricula based on data from student work. Teachers have stated that the students' Individualized Education Program (IEP) is the foundation of instructional goals. Modifications are made to curricula such as lesson plans and units based on student mastery of their IEP goals. In a six to one to one ELA lesson plan, a student’s IEP stated that the student will read a story and state three facts from the text. Because the student struggled with the goal, the teacher provided more context clues and visuals to the story. An additional example was seen with a dual-language lesson. The lesson on the book *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* was modified to include text in Spanish and pictures to accompany the text. This was also evident in a dual-language lesson plan that refined the lesson by including questions in Spanish on student worksheets based on their student assessments that demonstrated their English proficiency. Teachers have stated that the scaffolds to support language contribute to student cognitive engagement.

- Lesson plans demonstrate student cognitive engagement for individual students. A self-contained science class lesson plan on matter and its properties was presented. Cognitive engagement for students included creating a poster of an element that each student adopted. The plan also required students to create a presentation discussing the element from the periodic table that they chose. Small group instruction in the plan included students being required to work in pairs using their electronic devices to answer teacher-generated question using yes/no icons about the material. The lesson plan was divided into student levels consisting of tiers. Tier one students would demonstrate cognitive engagement by making choices responding to pictures. Tier two students were required to write missing words to complete five sentences and tier three students demonstrated engagement by identifying the main idea and answering “wh” questions. Lesson plans across all grades and subjects reflected cognitive engagement for all students.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

All classrooms incorporate the use of rubrics that demonstrate student mastery. Across the vast majority of classrooms visited, teachers used varied checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Feedback to students is actionable and meaningful. Adjustments that are made in classroom instruction allows for students to be clear on next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Various checks for understanding were used in all classrooms visited that resulted in instructional adjustments. During an observation of a dual-language math class students were working on counting money. The teacher walked around the room. Some students were working on a cash register, some were using a calculator and some had a price-matching sheet. As the teacher walked around, checks for understanding were demonstrated for each group of students. For example, for the student working on the matching sheet that required them to match prices to objects, the teacher asked, "How do you know this is right?" When the student struggled with the answer, the teacher provided the student with a calculator. Another student was observed working with a calculator, the teacher asked the student why this lesson was important. The student did not respond, and as a result the teacher discussed with the whole group the importance of going to the store, counting money and getting correct change. An additional example was seen in a class on Native American history. Students were studying Native Americans in United States history. The teacher did a check for understanding by asking students, "Does anyone remember the vocabulary words that that we are working on?" A student did not respond. The teacher provided hand over hand assistance to point to the word culture. An additional student stated tribes, but could not define it. The teacher asked him to point to a picture of it and describe what he saw. To ensure that students were aware of their next learning steps, the teacher had students’ point to the word culture when asking them why the Native Americans were important.

- Rubrics used demonstrated meaningful feedback to students and mastery. A schoolwide rubric measures student performance as well as areas of accuracy and independence for writing. A student received a well-developed for accuracy and independence. Teacher comments included, “Amazing writing. Next steps: include less prompting and visual cues." An additional rubric showed a student demonstrated mastery in reading aloud and underlining. The next steps for the student included using fewer writing prompts. This schoolwide rubric was used in every class.

- All students use self-assessments in class. Students used a form entitled “My Self-Assessment.” The form lists the following check-offs, “I completed my work on time,” “I participated in the class discussion,” “I helped a friend,” “I was respectful to my peers during the lesson,” and “I understood the lesson.” One student checked all smiling faces for the listed criteria. Another student had the same self-assessment but had to write the answers in. The student stated they completed their work on time, they participated in class discussion and they did not help a friend. This rubric also included what the lesson was about and how the student felt at the end of the lesson. The student stated the lesson was about the Day of the Dead and they felt “OK” at the end of the lesson. The student demonstrated awareness of next learning steps by stating that will be working on foods related to the topic.
Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide training to the entire staff. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning based on a unified set of high expectations.

Impact

Communication and professional development around high expectations results in a culture of mutual accountability. Supports ensure that students are ready for next steps and own their educational experience.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate clear expectations by distributing a monthly newsletter. A newsletter submitted for the current school year included non-negotiable high expectations and stated, “Ongoing assessments must be evident throughout instructional activities, students must participate in self-reflective assessments and students need to be able to speak to the skills they are learning.” In every class visited, teachers provided self-reflections. Ongoing assessments including checks for understanding and Webb’s Depth of Knowledge questioning was evident. Teachers have stated that the training they received in September on “getting ready to learn” and “general response protocol” has been effective in classroom procedures. By having fellow colleagues collaborate on the topics and facilitate the professional developments, teachers have mutual accountability for the principal’s high expectations.

- Student supports are designed so that students own their educational experience. Students participate in work study program. The program allows students to spend part of the instructional day at work sites under the support of an occupational therapists and physical therapist. Students own the experience by selecting the job skills that help decide where they will work to prepare them for the next level after leaving school. Occupational therapists and physical therapist staff work with students to support career decisions and schedule worksite visits. One student stated that they like to work with people, so they chose to work at a sneaker store because it will help prepare her for the future. Another student stated that they chose to work in a food store because they like to work with money. Most students stated that one of their favorite things about school is having the ability to be involved in their educational experience.

- A team of guidance counselors collaborate with each other to promote a culture of learning that results in the communication of high expectations for all students. Counselors keep logs that include how as a team they counsel students based on their IEP goals and facilitate learning by connecting the teacher with the child’s learning style. High expectations communicated to students included behavioral expectations illustrated in student behavioral intervention plans. Counselors create behavioral plans based on in class observations with the expectation that the student will adhere to it.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote achievement of school goals and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams consistently analyze data and student work for students they share.

Impact
Teachers’ collaborations strengthen their capacity in instructional design and delivery. Teacher team work has resulted in improved teacher pedagogy.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams engage in inquiry-based collaborations based on student IEPs. A math team was observed during their weekly meeting. A teacher shared information on a student’s IEP stating that, “She is verbal but needs teacher prompting. She uses visual sentence starters. She is a class leader. Her social emotional needs are high: highly motivated by drawing circles.” To decrease the verbal prompts, a teacher suggested incorporating more peer-to-peer to collaborations so the student can depend less on prompts from the teacher. An additional example was highlighting the directions so she can focus on the task. Impact was seen as sample of student work provided demonstrated student comprehension by observing highlighted work. The teacher stated that the student was able to follow the directions after reading it once with highlights.

- Minutes from a science team meeting were presented. The minutes included what was discussed at the last meeting, including non-negotiables, observation feedback and expectations. One science teacher shared that her class is finishing working on their last experiment which was about matter. They will start working on concentrated solutions. Next, the class will be looking at plant cells in the month of November. Another teacher shared that, “It is important to show progression but it is also important to make academic tasks rigorous for our students.” Another teacher suggested creating experiment boxes to rotate in all classrooms in order to work on the same experiments in order to study data across grades. Next steps included another teacher presenting what they are working on in the classroom, looking at student work and creating a Google community to share resources and discuss students work products to further refine instructional tasks to improve teacher pedagogy. This was impactful as rigorous practices were observed in all teacher team minutes looked at. Teachers have stated that because of the rigor, students reading at levels three and four increased by five percent from fall 2016 to spring 2017.

- Teacher teams collaborate to improve teacher practices for students. A teacher group referred to as fellows, collaborate with other teachers to improve pedagogy. They are trained to support other teachers in areas of pedagogy by looking at data and reflecting on teaching practices. An example was given by a teacher who said the following in her reflection based on teacher collaboration, “I need to use the rubric in talking to my students. I see how much I’ve grown as a teacher and how I communicate with students and being clearer and follow the training rubric more. Data shows that I need to allow more time for my students to practice pacing because more wrong answers are evident as the assessment continues. I must give meaningful communication and improve on knowledge of practices.” This was evident as teachers have made improvements on questions and discussion techniques throughout the school. A teacher stated that this was largely due to the fellows’ support.